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THE SABBATH MONTH

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THE

SABBATH MONTH:

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS

FOR

YOUNG MOTHERS.

BY

LOUISE SEYMOUR HOUGHTON.

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PREFACE.

The weeks of retirement which are appointed to those who have just become mothers are, to many, a period of irksome restraint, where hours of pain alternate with hours of weariness and of anxious "thought-taking" about duties from which God's providence has secluded them. The writer, a joyful mother of many children, has been graciously led to find in this period a time in which the soul, defrauded of her rights by many jealous cares, has here enjoyed her Sabbaths. In this wilderness the Lord has spoken comfortably unto her; in it her heart has sung as in the days of her youth; and from it she has come up leaning upon her Beloved with renewed strength for the duties of daily life.

This thought she offers as a cup of cold water, in the name of Christ, to any expectant mother whose spirit faints at the prospect of the wearisome nights and days of darkness which are appointed her. The ark of the covenant of the Lord goes before you, beloved, to "search out a resting-place." "In the wilderness he will plead with you face to face. His presence will make the outgoings of the morning and of the evening to rejoice." So shall these weary weeks prove to you "a time of refreshing," a blessed "Sabbath of rest to the Lord."

"Like a pearl left on the shore
When the ocean's rage is o'er,
So, from out the storm and strife
Almost overwhelming life,
My dear waif, a little form,
Fragile, tender, soft and warm,
In my happy arms found rest,
Nestled to my loving breast.

"Oft and oft upon my bed
Has my heart looked up, and said,
'Oh, my God, to thee I call;
Thou, who only knowest all—

All the anguish of the night,
All the soft, serene delight
With which mothers wake to find
Day before them, night behind;—
Knowest, too, how brief a part
In the lifetime of one heart
Are the moments in which press
All this flood of blessedness;
How, through all the ages past,
And as long as time shall last,
Not an hour but, as it flies,
Holds such pain-bought ecstasies;
Yet unmoved canst bear the sight
In thy silent, heavenly height,
Never, never, did my heart
Feel as now, how great thou art!'

"And yet once that *One* unseen
Left his hiding-place serene;
Once, half shone on human sight
The Divine and Infinite—
Not in passionless repose,
But as sharer of our woes.
'Born of woman;'—since that hour
Has her curse lost half its power;
Since he came its sphere within,
Sorrow has joy's servant been.
Now, beneath its sheltering wing,
Lo our sweetest blessings spring—
All the loves and hopes which start
From the overflowing heart;

All familiar joys and ties
Gilded as with parting eyes ;
All the silent strength of faith
Standing face to face with death;
All the morning's sweet delight
Dawning on the stormy night,
And the glad return once more
To the half-relinquished shore,
Doubly beautiful to view
With its old joys and its new.
Oh, if such God's *curses* prove,
What must be his full-orbed love?

"Ah, thou heaven-sweet, precious thing!
Thou did'st need such heralding,
Lest, too satisfied, my heart
Dare forget from whence thou art—
Dare forget thy royal rights
In my fostering delights,
And how tenderly God laid
His dear hand on me, and said,
'I have noble work for thee;
Come aside, and learn of me!'
So I left the din and crowd
And the voices gay and loud,
And, like Mary, did repair,
Hasting to the hills for prayer;
And in sweet retirement then,
Near to God and far from men,
On my waiting soul did ope
All the glory of its hope,

And my heart, once light and free,
Learned the Mother's mystery—
Learned its holy cross to bear
Of sorest sorrow and dear care;
While each day, a heavenly voice
Made me tremble and rejoice:
'Lo, the Father sends to thee
A soul from out eternity;
Come thou to the border;—there
Its angel yields it to thy care!'

"Now, returned to all life's charms
With the treasure in my arms,
Oh, my God, from this full heart
Let the vision not depart!"

(*From Putnam's Monthly.*)

THE SABBATH MONTH.

THE PREPARATION-DAY.

"A woman, when she is in travail, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world."—JOHN xvi. 21.

HOW wonderful it is that even in this mysterious trial, this union of sorrow and joy, of sharpest pangs and holiest bliss—which can never be comprehended but by one who has experienced it—that even here our Lord can sympathize with us most perfectly! Who else could so describe the sorrow and the happiness, the shrinking fear and the glad rejoicing, but He who has travailed in birth for souls, and whose joy over each newly-born spirit is unspeakable and full of glory?

It is wonderful to contemplate that as the hour of his passion was approaching his words were so much of joy. "If ye loved me," he says, "ye would *rejoice;*" "These things have I spoken unto you, that your *joy might be full;*" "Ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and *your joy no man taketh from you.*" For the sake of "*the joy* set before him" he endured the cross—not merely his own joy, though he looked forward to the time when he should see of the travail of his soul and should be satisfied, but he foresaw also the joy of his redeemed ones, and this gave him strength to endure.

Since he has himself likened the pangs and sorrows of his hour to the hour of suffering which now approaches us, there can be no irreverence in our meekly appropriating the comfort which springs from his words. We too may be sustained by the joy set before us. We may take hold of his strength, which has been made perfect through

suffering; nay more, by faith we may now be admitted into the fellowship of his sufferings, and gain a new, mysterious insight into the depths of his love for us.

Patience worketh experience, *and experience hope.* Our experience of his mercy, multiplied beyond measure, may well teach us to rejoice now in the hope of deliverance. In this ordeal especially through which we are now to pass does not experience tell us to be of *good cheer?* How many, many joyful mothers of children are all around us! How few, how very few in comparison, have laid down their lives in this conflict! "I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," is especially the language of God at this time. And have we not, for our support, a promise which our infinitely tender Father, foreseeing our faint-heartedness, has sent to us as an especial message of grace?—"Notwithstanding, she *shall be saved* in child-bearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness, with sobriety." She *shall* be saved!

Let us lay hold on this promise with a firm grasp. The conditions need not frighten us, for God, who searcheth the heart, knows that, though perhaps in the midst of unbelief, we *do believe.* And our faith is counted to us for righteousness. And he giveth more grace.

Let us, then, boldly say, "The Lord is my helper." We may both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord. Our times are in his hands. God is our refuge and strength, a *very present* help in trouble. Let us look, then, rather at the joy set before us than at the sorrow which will precede it. Weeping may endure for a night, but *joy cometh in the morning.*

THE APPROACHING HOUR.

"O LORD, I am oppressed, undertake for me. My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble. Oh keep my soul and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in thee. O my God, my soul is cast down within me; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me. Be not thou far from me, O Lord. O my strength, haste thee to help me."

"Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. When thou passest through the waters I will

be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I, the Lord, will *hold thy right hand*, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you. I will strengthen thee upon the bed of languishing; I will make all thy bed in thy sickness. Be strong and of good courage; fear not, nor be afraid, for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee nor forsake thee."

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand uphold me. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? I sought the Lord, and he heard me and delivered me

from all my fears. Thou drewedst near me in the day that I called upon thee; thou saidst, Fear not. Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Oh, how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee! I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord."

FIRST DAY.

"Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me."—2 Tim. iv. 17.

"MY soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. What shall I render unto God for all his benefits toward me? For the sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell got hold upon me. But thou hast delivered my soul from death and mine eyes from tears. In the day of my calamity the Lord was my

stay. Thou hast made me exceeding glad with thy countenance. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him. Thy vows are upon me, O Lord; I will render praises unto thee.

"Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Lord, I have hoped in thee, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in my heart."

Grant, Lord Jesus, that my love to thee may abound yet more and more; may I feel in my inmost heart that I am not my own, having been bought by the sufferings of the Son of God, and may I endeavor through my whole life to glorify thee in my body and my spirit, which are thine!

SECOND DAY.

"And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me."—MATT. xviii. 5.

DEAR Lord, can this be true? Dost thou indeed so identify thyself with the very least of all thy ransomed ones that whoso shall receive one of them with glad welcome for the sake of the Lord who bought it, receiveth thee to be a guest who shall go no more out? Oh, then, dear Saviour, so sanctify the love which I now have for my baby, so purify and elevate it, that I shall see in the little one in my arms not merely the child of my own love and suffering, but thy child, ransomed with suffering infinitely greater than my own. So this beloved one becomes a thousand-fold more dear for thy sake while I minister unto it as unto thee.

Come, then, Lord Jesus; be it unto me according to thy word. Abide with me; make of my heart thy temple. Fulfill unto

me thy promise; behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus!

THIRD DAY.

"Be glad with her, all ye that love her."—ISA. lxiv. 10.

HOW sweet a joy is that in which we all partake in welcoming the little newcomer into the world! How glad we are with the dear mother! How every tender word of salutation comes rushing to our lips! "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women!" "Peace be to thee, our friends salute thee!" "The children of thine elect sister greet thee!" "All the saints salute you, chiefly they which are of Cæsar's household"—of the family of our great King.

We do not wonder, now, that when of old

he laid the foundations of the earth, the habitation of the children whom he was to create, the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. We realize something of the intense sympathy without which even the infinite joy of the heavenly Father was not complete. And when he bringeth the First-Begotten into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. Then it was that the glory of the Lord appeared on earth, and the skies were filled with a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men.

"Unto *us* a son is born, unto *us* a child is given." Oh, this mystery of babyhood! who can fathom it? "His name shall be called wonderful;" not the divine Infant alone, but every baby born into the world. In what respect is the little one other than wonderful, not only to the mother, but to us all, who love her? How wonderful to us are the tiny

hands, the half-formed features, the sleepings and wakings of the mysterious little one! With what absorbing interest have we watched every phase of its three-day life, laying up every indication of development in our hearts, saying, "What manner of child shall this be?"

He of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named has given us, with this little one, another link in the golden chain of fellowship—a new bond of union with each other and with the family above. The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in our tabernacles, and with full hearts we pray, "The blessing of the Lord be upon you; we bless you in the name of the Lord."

FOURTH DAY.

"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." (Margin, *give suck.*)—ISA. xl. 11.

THE margin shows that this verse brings an especial word of comfort to the mothers of infant children—to those who by reason of the peculiar demands upon their strength, the new and tender anxieties and cares which devolve upon them, are in especial need of "gentle leading." Already, perhaps, after our great joy at deliverance from suffering and from the fear of death, our glad acceptance of the new-born gift, already has come the weariness and faintness of new responsibility; our souls are discouraged because of the way; our weak hands hang down and our feeble knees refuse to support us. "Who is sufficient for these things?" is our anxious cry. And the answer comes speedily—yes, even before we have called—

"Behold, the Lord our God will come with a *strong hand.*" He shall gather our little lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom, and he will gently lead the weary, fainting mother.

Oh how surely, how unfailingly, he comes to our help!—not one of us is forgotten before God. "Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out." He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. "I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to *lie down,*" saith the Lord. Yes, to lie down in green pastures and beside the still waters. Oh, what a *restoring* of the soul is this!

So, *now,* we may *rest* in his love. And when he calls us to resume our journey, he leads us again by the hand. For he calleth his own sheep *by name,* and *leadeth* them out; and when he putteth forth his own sheep into contact with the world, when he bids them leave the secure fold where, for a season, he has shut them up from harm, he

goeth before them. No evil can reach them till it has overcome him; and of that there is no fear. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Dear Saviour, we will not fear. When thou wilt lead us out we will follow thee, for we know thy voice. Our lambs to thy tender arms, ourselves to thy gracious leading, we now gladly surrender, reposing peacefully upon thy word: "The Lord knoweth them that are his."

FIFTH DAY.

"Take this child away and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."—Ex. ii. 9.

THE princess of Egypt, having redeemed the little child from the decree of death impending over him, returned him to his own mother, saying, "Take this child away and nurse it for me." How striking a parallel we find in this to God's dealings with us and our children!

They, too, are doomed to death. We are powerless to save them; our only hope is to cast them entirely upon his mercy, praying him to adopt them into his own family, and so redeem them from the power of sin and death. And he hears our prayer, and answers it—not by taking them at once to be with him, and so removing them from all danger. *That* would, indeed, be surprising mercy. But in his infinite love he has better things in store for us than this; he accepts the trust our weakness and almost despairing faith imposes on him; he enters into covenant with us for our children, and then, in tender mercy to our longing mother-hearts, he recommits each child to our hands, saying, "Nurse it *for me.*"

May I never neglect this solemn trust! May I never forget that it is for God that I am nursing my little one! May this child be an offering *wholly* dedicated unto God! May "Holiness to the Lord" be inscribed upon everything which has reference to it, and no

taint of self-seeking mar this service, no lower aim be mine than to keep it unspotted from the world!

"And I will give thee thy wages." It had been bliss sufficient for that Hebrew mother to receive her baby into her arms, with permission to nurse and tend it for the gracious princess who had saved its life. But she is, beyond this, to receive wages for her labor of love. So with us; even in this life, for all our prayers and tears, our struggles with Satan—who desires to have our precious ones—and with the sin which so nearly has dominion over them,—for all this we shall receive "manifold more" even in this present life, and in the world to come, for us and for them, life everlasting.

SIXTH DAY.

"And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord."—Isa. liv. 13.

BLESSED is the man whom thou teachest, O Lord! and thrice blessed the children whom thou dost in infancy adopt into thy school! I ask not with Salome, "Grant that my children may sit at thy right hand and at thy left in thy kingdom," but, dear Lord, I pray, Take my baby into thine arms and bless it, and so give it a knowledge of thyself.

And yet, like Salome, I know not what I ask. Can my child drink of the cup which thine infinite wisdom ordains for it? I know not what pain and sorrow, what suffering, want or woe, thy love may provide for this precious little one, whom I would fain defend from all ill. How shall I bear to see the evil that may come upon my beloved in answer to my prayer? Only by thy grace, O God. Yet keep my lamb from sinning

against thee, Lord, and I will leave all else to thee. Mould it in thine image, and then, come sorrow, come suffering, come death, all shall be well with the child.

"And great shall be the peace of thy children." Lord, what a rock of strength is thy word of promise! Great peace have they who love thy law; yea, great peace even in sorrow and under the chastening of the Lord. Have I not known this in my own life, and shall I not believe that my child shall find it true? I will be anxious no more, dear Saviour. Into thy loving hands do I commit this child of my sorrows and my joyful hopes. Keep my little one in the secret of thy presence. I will both lay me down in peace and sleep, for in the day when I cried thou answeredst me and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

SEVENTH DAY.

"Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered."—LUKE xii. 7.

THE little head, with its scanty adornment of silken hair, lies cradled on my arm. I pass my hand over the shining down, smoothing and parting it; the soft, satin touch thrills to my very heart; I count each bright thread a priceless treasure, while my Saviour, never so near to me as in these holy days, draws closer and whispers, "Even the very hairs of *your* head are all numbered."

"You who love your baby so," he says to me, "do you *now* believe? Can you now realize something of my tender care of my 'little ones'? He that toucheth *you* toucheth the apple of my eye. Do you see a beauty in your baby, hidden, you know, from others, but revealed none the less evidently to you? Behold, *thou* art fair, my love, behold thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks. Can you now understand my pleasure

in that utter helplessness which is your baby's dearest claim upon your love and your own strongest tie to mine? Thou canst not make one hair white or black; what can you do to shield yourself from harm? yet am not I with thee? There shall not a hair of your head perish. Not in infancy alone, but even to your old age, I am He, and even to hoar hairs I will carry you. I have made and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you."

O God, thou hast taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works; now, also, unto old age and gray hairs (margin), O God, forsake me not. The Lord hath *been mindful* of us; he will bless us. Yes, thou Lord, art a shield for me, my glory and the lifter up of my head. Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over; surely, goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. For this God is our God for ever and

ever; he will be our guide even unto death. Therefore, the redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and *everlasting joy shall be upon their head;* they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.

EIGHTH DAY.

"Then Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born."—JUDG. xiii. 8.

WE have the aid of angels in our work. Are they not all ministering spirits, *sent forth* to minister to them who shall be *heirs of salvation?* Our children are heirs, for the children of promise are counted for the seed, and in heaven their angels do always behold the Father's face.

In their ignorance as to the right manner of training the promised child, Manoah and his wife prayed that the angel might

come again and teach them. And He who ever hath compassion on the ignorant sent the heavenly messenger for their instruction.

In this history lies a twofold encouragement for us: First, in showing that the ignorance which is through the weakness of our nature need in no way harm our children, since God is able to supply all our need; and again in the contemplation of the bright and glorious company who are his messengers of grace to us. We *are come* unto an innumerable company of angels, who all, with holy delight, rejoice to watch over the training of immortal souls which shall shine in the kingdom of their God.

Oh, the wonderful contrast between our weakness and those ministers of his which *excel* in strength! How glorious the thought that we are constantly accompanied by them, and that they have received a charge concerning us! So Daniel, the man greatly beloved, was strengthened by an angel. So Isaiah, when overwhelmed by a sense of sin,

was purified through the medium of an angel. So John, the beloved disciple, was led by an angel in his visions of the New Jerusalem even to the very throne of God.

We need not fear that this ministration of angels will intervene between our souls and Christ. They are no hindrance to the free and unceasing communion of the faithful soul with her Lord. Yet even as he delights to do the will of God, so his servants delight in ministering to his redeemed ones, his *special treasure* (Mal. iii. 17, margin). Oh, the glorious assembly to which this ministration introduces us!

NINTH DAY.

"We are the children of God, . . . and if children then, heirs."—Rom. viii. 16, 17.

AH, what a new meaning these blessed words bear to me now as I hold my own child in my arms! To be the child of God!

to belong to him in this dearest, closest of relations! Can it be possible that I can be to God what my child is to me? that he can so delight in me as I now delight in my baby? "The Lord thy God will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love: he will joy over thee with singing," even as I now do over thee, my little one, with a joy which is but a shadow of the joy of our Father over his redeemed ones.

Oh, let me take this love of mine for my child for a lesson; and daily, as it grows stronger and deeper, may my apprehension of God's love for me become deeper and truer, and a more living power in my heart. Do I delight in providing for thy wants, my baby? "How much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!" Do I shrink from pain for my darling and hush all its little sorrows upon my bosom? "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Do I bear with loving patience the cares which my

baby's infirmities bring upon me? "His compassions fail not," and "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Would I keep all harm and danger from my little one, and guard it even with my own life? "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son" for its salvation. *His Son—his only Son!* Oh the depths of love which could conceive of such a sacrifice!—love of which I, clasping my baby to my heart, now first begin to have a glimmering sense. Oh for *such* love what devotion can be an adequate return? Who can even begin to comprehend this love of God to us?

Where, then, is doubt or distrust or anxiety of mind? What place can it find in the presence of this wondrous love? "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, *how shall he not*, with him, freely give us all things?" How, indeed! What could he withhold after such an infinite sacrifice? All things are indeed

mine while I call God my Father, for "if children, then heirs."

Lord Jesus, help me daily, as I feel my love for my child growing and strengthening in my heart, to gain deeper insight into the love of God for me. Behold, *what manner* of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called *the sons of God!*

TENTH DAY.

"Neither shall any man desire thy land, when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God thrice in the year."—Ex. xxxiv. 24.

"SEE, for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath, *therefore* he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days."

"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him."

There is no danger in the way of the Lord's commandments. The children of

Israel could safely leave their wives and their little ones, their flocks and herds, while they went up to appear before the Lord; no man should desire their land, and all would be safe in the keeping of their heavenly Father. When God gives a command he provides the way for its keeping. If he gives the Sabbath, and ordains that in it no work shall be done, he also gives on the sixth day the bread of two days; if he sends all the men-children up to his holy feast, he makes even their enemies to be at peace with them during their absence. He is able to keep that which is committed to him.

O my soul! stay thou thyself upon this word of the Lord; his hand is not shortened, and every word of the Lord is sure. Hast thou not in thine own providence laid me aside from my usual duties, dear Lord, and may I not trust thee that no harm shall ensue from my absence? Lord, I am prone to anxiety about those whose comfort and well-being seemed to me to depend upon my

presence among them. I picture to myself the dreariness of the place which I have left to go up and appear before thee; the solitude of those to whom my society is dear; the dangers to which they are exposed who need my care; the neglected duties of those who miss my supervision; the little corner of thy vineyard, where I have been wont to labor, neglected. Lord, help me to roll all this burden upon thee. I have thine assurance, the wolf shall not be permitted to creep into the fold during my absence. No hireling shall lead any of the flock astray. Thou *art able* to keep that which I have committed to thee. Keep me too, dear Saviour, under the shelter of thy wings, safe from all evil and from the fear of evil. "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust."

"Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day, nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth

at noonday. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."

ELEVENTH DAY.

"And white robes were given unto every one of them."—Rev. vi. 11.

As my baby is brought to me so pure and spotless in the white robes my own love and forethought have provided for it, a new lesson in holiness, a fresh sense of my heavenly Father's love, is brought home to my heart.

I am reminded of the tender joy with which I prepared not only things useful and necessary, but all manner of beautiful and dainty garments, for my baby. And so I learn to trust my Saviour, not alone for things needful to my existence, but for what-

ever of beauty and of luxury my nature craves, as far as he sees them to be good for me. With what glory and loveliness he has clothed the earth! how he has delighted to make all things beautiful in their season! and "if God *so* clothe the grass of the field," shall he not *much more* clothe me—with more delight, more forethought provide for me? "Your heavenly Father *knoweth* that ye have need of all these things," and anticipates every want as gladly as I, with loving heart, provided for my baby's coming. "Bring forth the *best robe*," he commands, "and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet"—ornament and luxury for whom provided? Not for one innocent of actual offence, as is my baby, but for one who, like me, has broken his law and wounded his love; even for such a one as this. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me in the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

So, "because he delights in me," as I in my little one, he delivers me from sin and wills my perfect holiness. "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I have clothed thee with change of raiment." "Awake, put on thy beautiful garments, for from henceforth there shall no more come unto thee the uncircumcised and unclean." No stain of sin may be cherished in my soul, for "the King's daughter is all glorious within," "and unto her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, pure and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints."

So, when I look upon my baby's white robes and recall the bright anticipations of future loveliness, the prayers for my little one's constant growth toward perfection, which I stitched into every seam and fold of the delicate white raiment, I am reminded that not yet is the "perfection of beauty" which my Father has designed for me. That great multitude which no man could number,

which stood before the throne of God and of the Lamb, is of them which have come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. *Therefore* are they before the throne of God. May I be numbered with that holy throng! Grant me grace, O my Saviour, no longer to shrink from the trials which thy love ordains for my perfecting. Bestow upon me that absolute confidence in thee which will enable me to receive sorrow from thy hand with cheerfulness, "not accepting deliverance" from aught which thou sendest as a preparation for the glorious day of thine appearing.

And yet, as I receive my white-robed baby into my arms fresh and pure from its morning bath, I feel that great rushing tide of tenderness which tells me that in no future development of strength and beauty can my child be more precious to me than now in utter weakness and dependence. So may I realize the infinite tenderness of our Father

for those who cast themselves, helpless and humble, upon his love, and may I seek to receive the kingdom of heaven "as a little child"!

TWELFTH DAY.

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord."—GEN. xviii. 19.

THE literal rendering of the Hebrew would be, "I have known (*i. e.* foreknown, elected) him, *to the end that* he should command his children," etc. We learn, then, that Abraham was distinctly selected by God in order that he might train up a chosen seed, an elect people, to keep the way of the Lord.

"For this cause I have raised thee up." There is no such thing as a *happening* with our God. "Ye have not chosen me, *but I have* chosen you." And for what? "That ye should bring forth fruit." It is always for some *purpose*. "Elect unto good works"—

"called to be saints"—"whom he did foreknow, them he did *predestinate to be conformed* to the image of his Son."

Abraham was elected to command his children and his household that they should keep the way of the Lord; and this is also our calling. To *his* descendants were to be committed the oracles of God and the sacred trust of preserving a pure worship. Who shall say what is the service to which God has destined *our* children? Yet that they shall be fitted for it depends, under God, upon us. Oh to be faithful in all our house—to set the Lord *always* before us! Our religious teachings not confined to stated hours and days, but to proceed spontaneously from a heart filled with all the fullness of God! "And these words—thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and shalt *talk of them* when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest by the way."

God established his covenant with Abraham, saying, "Walk before me, and be thou

perfect, and I will give unto thy seed all the land of Canaan, and I will be their God." If the blessings of the covenant depended upon our walking within our house in a perfect way, unaided, we might indeed tremble for our children. But God has made a new covenant with his people—"an everlasting covenant, that I will put my fear in their hearts, that *they shall not depart* from me." Here, indeed, is safety.

Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God. Oh for Abraham's faith! for Abraham's unquestioning obedience! for Abraham's high honor in the *friendship* of God!

THIRTEENTH DAY.

"As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word."—1 Pet. ii. 2.

ANOTHER lesson I may learn in this school in which God has placed me, and again my baby is the teacher. And that is the theme of the lesson, which most perfectly shows its entire dependence upon me. How entirely the one desire for the mother's breast absorbs and comprehends this little life! Already it has come to know this all-sufficient satisfaction for every want of its existence—to find unutterable content in the provision which has been made to meet its wants.

So with my hungering and thirsting soul, which was created for the enjoyment of God, and can never be satisfied with any lesser good. But how often, unlike my baby, I seek to satisfy its hunger with that which satisfieth not! Although I have so often tasted that the Lord is gracious, how often do I suffer from hunger while yet he is ever

willing to satisfy *all* my need. Oh let me lay this to heart! As my baby's voice crying for food awakes me early from my sleep, so "my voice thou shalt hear in the morning, O Lord;" "oh, satisfy us *early* with thy mercy." May I desire no other refreshment than the rivers of *thy* pleasure, of which thou makest thy people to drink! May the one hunger and thirst after righteousness so absorb me that no other aim may seem worthy of my pursuit! And as my baby, in the weakness of its new-born life, needs to be frequently nourished, that it may grow and become strong, so may I come frequently to thee, O thou who art the Bread of Life, that I may grow in grace and in the knowledge of God! And as every pain and sorrow this dear baby experiences is forgotten at this "cup of his life and couch of his rest," so may I in every sorrow turn to thee who wilt satiate the weary soul and replenish every sorrowful soul, until, in the newness of life, I and the children which thou hast given

me come to dwell where we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and shall lead us unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes!

FOURTEENTH DAY.

"Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name."—Ex. xxxiii. 17.

THE baby's name! How important a matter is its selection! How many considerations go toward determining it! And what a new and complete satisfaction the mother feels in her little one when she knows it *by name!* What sweet associations gather around the baby's name—of a dear parent, or of a loved brother or sister, or of some most precious friend, perhaps already gathered into the eternal home, and whose most hallowed remembrance will henceforth be in the dear child who bears the name!

But to be known by name of God! To be personally recognized by him, singled out by him from all the world to be the recipient of his grace! Shall this wondrous blessing be indeed the portion of our darling? For thus saith the Lord unto his chosen: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by name; thou art mine." "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands." "For thus saith the Lord unto those who choose the things that please him, and who take hold of his covenant, Even to them will I give a place and a name better than that of sons and of daughters, even an everlasting name." Then we need not fear whatever of trial or of discipline the world may bring to our precious ones, for they will ever be under the guidance of the Good Shepherd, "who calleth his sheep by name," who will make them more than conquerors, and will give to each one who overcometh "a white stone, and in the stone a *new name* written, which no one knoweth save him that receiv-

eth it." Blessed secret, known only to the soul and its Redeemer!

But thou dost not only know us by name, O Lord—thou dost even reveal thyself to us by thine own name of Emmanuel, God with us. Thy name is no more secret, for "behold, the tabernacle of the Lord is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads." "Him that overcometh thou wilt make a pillar in the house of thy God, and wilt write upon him the name of God, and wilt write upon him thy new name." "O Lord, our Lord, how *excellent* is thy name in all the earth! Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise."

FIFTEENTH DAY.

"I thank God when I call to remembrance the faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and in thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."—2 Tim. i. 3, 5.

WE learn from these words what a cause of thankfulness we have who can look back upon a long line of pious ancestry. There were those who asked, when they learned that the redemption purchased by Christ was not to be confined to the chosen race, "What advantage, then, hath the Jew?" And Paul's answer was emphatic: "*Much every way;* chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God." This was their inheritance from "faithful Abraham," for it was his faith which led to his family becoming the recipients and conservators of the word of God.

How often, too, in the midst of unbelief and idolatry was the rebellious nation saved from destruction for the fathers' sakes! Many

a time would they have been cut off in their sins but that God remembered that they were "the seed of Israel, my chosen," "the seed of Abraham, my friend." How God seems to delight in calling this people by these names, and in identifying them thus with their faithful ancestors! The pious Israelite had no stronger plea with which to approach his God. "Art not thou our God?" prayed Jehoshaphat when in fear from "a great multitude" which threatened him—"our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of *Abraham, thy friend?*" What depths of consolation lay hidden for him in that remembrance of his ancestor, the friend of God!

The benefits which to the children of Abraham according to the flesh were chiefly temporal are to the spiritual Israel spiritual and eternal. And they are *real.* As the sinning Israelites could never fairly estimate to what extent they owed their deliverance

from their enemies and from other chastisement to their faithful ancestors, so in all probability we have a very inadequate conception of what we owe to ours in the subduing of evil tendencies, in the elevation of the moral nature, in an early bent of the mind toward God and holiness. A simple contrast between the children of heathen and of Christian lands shows us something of this. While our children are born into the world partakers of a perverted nature, on how much higher a plane do they stand as to their moral perceptions, their capacity for religous training, than those whose parents have never known God! The *heritage* of faith is no empty word. It is something to have the heritage of "them that fear thy name." "A goodly heritage" indeed is that acquaintance with God which has been handed down from parent to child through many generations. For Timothy the influence of a pious mother and grandmother availed to counteract the influence of a

heathen father, of the heathen community in which he was born. It made of him in early youth a valued servant of the Lord, enabling him to overcome the hindrance of a delicate constitution and to become the workfellow of Paul, the companion of his bonds, the bishop of a church of which the Lord could say, "I know thy works, and thy labor and thy patience, and how thou hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored and hast not fainted." Was not this indeed a goodly heritage? To *our* children an equal blessing will ensue if we transmit to them unspotted the holy legacy of faith which we ourselves have inherited. And to us what greater joy can there be than to see our children walking in the truth?

Oh, does not the thought of all we have *on our side*, of all our encouragements, stir us up to be very faithful, "*knowing* that our labor shall not be in vain in the Lord," and that our experience through life and in

death will be, "There has not failed *one word* of all his good promise"? "The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers!" Amen.

SIXTEENTH DAY.

"I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children."—ISA. xlix. 25.

THERE is one who contendeth with us. Your adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Therefore, it especially behooves *us* to be sober, be vigilant, for we wrestle not with flesh and blood. This is a real warfare in which we shall engage for the souls of our children. Let us earnestly take heed, then, that our hearts be not overcome with the *cares of this life*, which are so imperative in their demands upon us, lest we thus gradually fall into a condition where the enemy may snatch away the souls entrusted to us.

For he is vigilant and terribly in earnest, and is not afraid to seek to lay his hand even upon the Lord's own children. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat." Ah! blessed for Simon that his Lord added, "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not"!

Here is an encouragement: "*I have prayed for thee.*" "I will contend with him that contendeth with thee." "*I will save thy children.*" What a precious promise is this! How we may stay ourselves upon it! Yes, Christ has indeed contended, and with sore wounds has achieved the salvation of our children. It pleased the Lord to bruise him—for the transgression of his people was he stricken. The Prince of this world came to him, and in deadly conflict persecuted his soul. In that anguish in which he sweat great drops of blood he wrestled with the enemy of souls. The terrible cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" bore

witness to his mortal sorrow. But he conquered. In that bitter moment *it was finished.* Through death he destroyed him that had the power of death, and delivered them whom he came to save.

"I will save thy children." This word is our security. But never, never, while we remember the price he has paid for their ransom, can we weary in our struggles against his enemy and ours.

Let us fight on, then, for the souls of our children. Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world. The God of peace shall bruise Satan under our feet shortly, and "to him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

SEVENTEENTH DAY.

"He pitched his tent toward Sodom."—GEN. xiii. 12.

THERE is a very solemn lesson to parents in the example of Lot, and especially to mothers, who are, apparently, more liable to fall into the snare in which he was taken. For years Lot had been a sharer in all the blessings of Abraham—in his protection from danger, in his worldly prosperity, and in the personal guidance of God. That he was a righteous man we have the testimony of St. Peter to supplement the somewhat doubtful witness of his life. But his riches were a snare to him. When it became necessary, from his increasing wealth, to remove from the near neighborhood of Abraham, beholding the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, he chose the whole plain of Jordan, but "he pitched his tent *toward Sodom*," although he knew that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord

exceedingly." That was the first step. A second finds him *dwelling in Sodom;* and a third, sitting in the place of honor at the gate of the city.

And what a bitter harvest of his worldliness did he reap! Saved, indeed, himself, "the Lord being merciful to him," but saved so as by fire, his wife overtaken by a fearful doom, his children lost, if not in the destruction of Sodom, yet in being left to fall into the blackest crimes, their moral nature utterly corrupted by the ungodly associations of their youth.

What a fearful warning to any of us who are tempted to believe that conformity to the world will in any way benefit our children! To lose them through our very efforts for their prosperity! Do not our hearts tell us that salvation itself for us could be no salvation if they were lost? Yet are we not sometimes inclined to run this risk for the sake of certain advantages which may be gained for our children by the companion-

ship of worldly people, and trusting that we may still, by our prayers and teachings, keep their garments unspotted even while bringing them into contact with the pollution of sin? O Lord, save us from this delusion! Hide us, *in the secret of thy presence*, from the pride of man. When the Prince of this world cometh with all his flattering representations of the benefits of a worldly life, may he find "nothing in us" which responds to his allurements!

Let us beware of setting an undue estimate on the attractions and the usefulness of the friendship of the world. While we may use this world, let us do it tremblingly, as not *abusing* it. Demas, once the fellow-laborer of Paul, forsook him, *having loved this present world.* How many times have the *cares* of this world so choked the word in the heart of a believing mother that it has become unfruitful! Oh, let us not be conformed to the world! Though we live in it, let us remember that *we are not of it;* and

as the lily-bulb, planted in the dark and corrupting earth of a forest-bog, draws from thence only that which will nourish its fair growth and cause it to blossom forth into the perfect form of loveliness its Maker designed for it, so may we absorb from our earthly contact only that which shall cause us to grow into the likeness of our Lord! For "even in Sardis" he has those who have not defiled their garments, and "they shall walk with him in white."

EIGHTEENTH DAY.

"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength."—Ps. viii. 2.

OR, rather, as the Hebrew words signify, "hast thou *founded a tower of strength.*" The mother soon learns the meaning of the text. Words are inadequate to express the "strong consolation" which the baby brings its mother in moments of perplexity or of

weariness or of temptation. To turn from the cares which burden, or the sad thoughts which depress, to take the little one in her arms, to feel the soft pressure of baby lips upon her breast, the clinging of baby fingers around her own, is an unspeakable refreshment, a joy in which a stranger intermeddleth not. In those moments, too, which come to even the happiest wife, of longing for the dear ones of the early home from which distance or death has parted her, the baby is her best consoler. "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth."

How sweet is the thought that our Saviour in the days of his life on earth found strength and comfort to flow to his soul from the lips of babes! When little children joined the worshiping throng in crying hosanna to the Son of David—when, after the multitude had been silenced, their eager enthusiasm urged them to follow him even into the temple-court with their shouts of

praise—can we doubt that his soul was strengthened by the sound? He who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, shared also, we love to think, our consolations. And so his soul in that trying hour, sorrowing over Jerusalem, wounded by her sins, torn by the knowledge that these acclamations and hosannas of the multitude should in a few days be changed to the ferocious clamor of an angry mob,—his soul found soothing and strength in the voices of little children. He would not have them stilled. "Yea, have ye never read," he says, "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise?"

How surely do both parents find a "tower of strength" in their little one in respect of their own plans and aspirations! Few as their years may have been, they have sufficed to convince them of the inadequacy of life for the work they had set themselves to do. As the "celestial light" of youth begins to fade into the light of common day,

glorious visions lose their brightness, golden hopes grow dim, all labor seems wearisome and profitless. But the baby comes, and all is changed. The rosy light of a second dawn glows upon the parents' path; a vista as of eternity opens before it; life is no longer bounded by one short existence; hopes and plans are no more dwarfed by the narrow conditions of mortality, but spring up, broadening and widening over all time, while children and children's children shall carry on the work and bring that to grand completion of which the parents but laid the foundation.

Has not the Lord ordained that from these babes the Church on earth should draw new strength? When that happy day arrives of which we now discern the dawning—when every child upon whom the Excellent Name has been named shall be acknowledged among the people of God—when the heart of the fathers being turned to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers,

there shall be no longer schism in the members of Christ's body,—then will the Church awake and put on her strength as never before. Then Satan, being routed from his strongest hold, the hearts of the children, will be robbed of his greatest power over the Lord's people; then the hopefulness and the humility of the little child will alike infuse new life into our churches, and often and often will the Saviour's thanksgiving find an echo in the hearts of his people: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

NINETEENTH DAY.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee."—ISA. xxvi. 3.

THE marginal reading for mind is *imagination*, and in that word lies a very precious lesson for mothers, who are apt to

indulge in anxious fears and apprehensions of future evil to their loved ones. How many mothers have been robbed of half their joy in their infant children by dwelling upon the cares and sorrows, the temptations and sufferings, to which they are born! From all these vain imaginations let us turn, and stay ourselves upon the Lord. How rapidly, when some slight ailment affects the little one, do our thoughts spring forward to greater suffering in store for it, to possible bereavement in ourselves!—how often do we taste of the bitterness of death and of parting while as yet God has prepared no such sorrow for us! From this trial and from how many heavy forebodings we should be saved if our imagination were stayed on God! "Thou wilt keep him in *peace, peace*"—is the emphatic Hebrew idiom; and our Lord repeats it: "*Peace* I leave with you, *my peace* I give you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

We have little idea how much these "vain

[*i. e.* useless] thoughts" paralyze our hearts and unfit us for duty, and still less how they intervene between us and our God. It is no light thing that we thus disturb and frighten away the blessed Spirit of Peace which waits to take up its abode with us. "Casting down *imaginations* and bringing into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Christ." Herein lies a deep mystery. For "he learned obedience *through the things that he suffered;*" and our thoughts and imaginations will only be brought into captivity to his obedience when we too are *willing* to suffer his righteous will. Then we shall indeed not be afraid—not because no ill shall befall us, but because we are confident that all our affliction, being sent by him, shall work out a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." So shall we attain to the peace of him whose heart is *fixed*, trusting in the Lord.

But there is blessed occupation for thought and imagination. The remembrance of past

mercy, the hope of future and eternal glory, are blessed themes of contemplation. We do not sufficiently give ourselves to this business of heavenly meditation or of talking with God of his mercies. These quiet days of retirement are well fitted for forming the habit of such meditation. "O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel our fathers," prayed David, "keep this for ever in the *imagination* of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee." God's glory and greatness, his wonderful goodness to his people, and his condescension in permitting them to dedicate their wealth to his service, were the themes which David prayed might occupy the imagination of the people; and they are glorious occupation indeed for the thoughts of any of God's creatures. In such a habit of mind we would find our cares and anxieties more than half done away; our "peace would then be as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea."

TWENTIETH DAY.

"I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."—GEN. xvii. 7.

THIS was the promise of God to Abraham in the day that he (made, *i. e.*) *gave* his covenant to him—a covenant not made with conditions, as the first covenant with Adam; not even concerted between two consenting parties, as in the day when God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham's seed; but now a free gift, of which the sign and seal was found in the rite of circumcision. And this covenant we, the children of Abraham by faith, claim for our children whom we offer to God in the sacred ordinance of baptism. They are the children of God. Buried with Christ in baptism, they are to rise with him to newness of life. There is, therefore, *now* no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. We hope not merely for their future; we believe in

their *present* salvation. *Now* are they the sons of God.

Not for any regenerating grace in the ordinance. From the moment when we first bear them on our hearts to God and consecrate them to his service—a consecration of which the rite of baptism is the public token—from that moment God accepts them. "Fear not," he says to them; "I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine;" and in that pledge may we rest, giving our precious ones wholly into the hands of the Lord their Redeemer.

Rest, but not in inaction. How can we, to whom is committed the training of the children of a King, be ever unmindful of our high vocation? We are now co-workers with God in the education of his consecrated ones. How carefully shall we, partakers of this heavenly calling, be faithful in all our house! How confidently may we pray for a blessing on our labors, knowing that for his own name's sake he will do it! Our children

will not grow up in ignorance of their great privilege. From the earliest dawn of reason we will teach them the blessedness of their situation as being the little ones whom the Lord Jesus gathered in his arms and blessed. Not as Esau, who despised his birthright, but as the redeemed of the Lord, called unto holiness, they will grow up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. So, recognizing their peculiar responsibilities and confiding in their parents' God, whom they have early learned to know, we shall see them, as they arrive at a fit age to make a conscious choice, taking upon themselves the vows of the Lord. "Our sons will be as plants grown up in their youth," "our daughters as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace;" "and they shall be mine," saith the Lord of hosts, "in the day that I make up my jewels." For this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and such honor have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord!

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

"Feed the flock of God which are among you."—1 PET. v. 2.

AS Peter penned the words of this exhortation he can hardly have failed to recall to mind his Saviour's twice-repeated charge, "Feed my lambs." The lambs of the flock are very precious to our Lord.

There is a sense in which this exhortation is addressed especially to each mother, inasmuch as she stands at the head of one household in the Lord's Zion: "Feed the flock of God *which is among you.*"

Every living Christian strongly desires to labor actively for his Lord. Each one of us, when we first became conscious of his love, asked, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And to many of us the way seemed quite hedged up. Our circumstances, our youth, our sex, made it appear wise to our parents to circumscribe our field in a way which disappointed and tried our new-born

zeal. Or there seemed to be literally nothing for us to do. Many and many a beloved servant of the Lord has gone mourning all her days because her Master seemed to deny her the privilege of working for him—not realizing that her prayers and her *patience* were more potent service than any other. If we have belonged to this class before, our prayer is now answered. In the little child now given us we have one of Christ's flock, and the most precious, thankful task that heart could desire in nourishing its spiritual life.

There are others of us to whom the Lord has opened wide avenues of usefulness, whose time and strength have been gladly devoted to his active service. To such the injunction comes with double force: "Feed the flock of God *which is among you.* Beware how any foreign interest, however important, lead to the neglect of *one* duty to this precious soul which I have intrusted to thee." "As thy servant was busy *here and there,* he was

gone." Oh, can it be possible that *that* shall ever be the excuse we shall bring to God when at his appearing he shall ask, "Where is the flock that was given thee—thy beautiful flock?" The thought is too terrible. We shrink in horror from the idea of such a sequence to our busy labors in God's service.

Oh, let us never yield to this temptation. There is more danger of it than we now realize, shut up to the Sabbath rest of the sick-room, with eternity so near to us as it has been but now. Let us be very watchful in this matter who have wide-reaching sympathies in the field of the Lord. How bitter would be our cry, "Mine own vineyard have I not kept," if later in life we should see one of our children's souls dwarfed and stunted for want of the culture we should have given it years before!

Let "This one thing I do" be our motto. Let us be ensamples to our little flock in all holy living. Let us draw them with our

sweet influences till they run after us up the heavenly road. So may we appear before him with joy at last, saying, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, *and they have kept thy word.*"

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

"But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children."—Ps. ciii. 17.

HOW God delights in reminding us of his mercy! Thirty-seven times in the Bible he tells us that his mercy *endureth for ever.* When Moses prayed, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," he said, "I will make all my *goodness* pass before thee," and proclaimed his name—"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." And how infinitely his delight in mercy transcends his

pleasure in his justice—looking at it from the earthward side—is shown where he says, "Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the *third and fourth* generation," and "Know, therefore, that the Lord thy God is the faithful God which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a *thousand generations.*" This is indeed "keeping covenant with children's children." If they depart from his ways, he "will chasten them" indeed, but his "mercy shall not depart away from them." Prone to wander as we are, he does not leave us to ourselves. "Wherefore, I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your *children's children* will I plead." His covenant is an *everlasting* covenant.

There is something very noticeable in the expression, "his *righteousness* to children's children." It is as if he considered it a debt that he owed his servants—that they had a right to claim his mercy to their descend-

ants. "God is not *unrighteous*, to forget your work and labor of love;" no, "the righteous shall be in *everlasting* remembrance."

What an incentive is this to growth in grace! How earnestly shall I seek to be accounted as righteous in his sight if such benefits are to accrue therefrom not only to my children, but to children's children as long as the world shall endure. And oh the joy of knowing that righteousness may be mine through faith in our Lord Jesus! His robe of righteousness not only covers our sins and iniquities and makes us outwardly pure, hiding our sins from God's sight; such is its blessed and wondrous efficacy that it works within, and actually does purify the hearts of those over whom it is cast. We "are complete in him." Then let me quickly throw away the rags and tatters of my own righteousness, with which I may be seeking to adorn myself, and accept of "the righteousness which is by faith" so freely offered to me.

But the promise is to those who "keep his covenant and who remember his commandments, to do them." Then must I carefully train my children to know the *duties* as well as the *privileges* of the covenant. Its blessings are freely theirs; how awful, then, the penalty of a deliberate rejection of them! The thought that this depends, under God, upon mothers, must make us watchful indeed. But let us not be overwhelmed with this responsibility. It is a blessed thing if it keeps us instant in prayer, ever clinging to Jesus, who alone and who so freely gives grace to us and ours; and with what confidence we may ask him that he will put *such* a heart in them when we can say, "We do not present our supplications to thee for *our righteousness*, but for *thy great mercies*"! We shall never be ashamed who trust in the *mercy* of God that he will keep his covenant—still less we who trust in his *righteousness*.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

"And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually."—JOB i. 15.

"WHATSOEVER things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." Let us, then, consider the conduct of Job as an example for ourselves.

We find him offering intercessory prayer for his children. And how gladly do we accept this teaching that we *may* pray for ours! "And my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept," God himself says later to Job's three friends, showing that he delights in such prayer. What wings does this assurance lend to every mother's prayer as she pleads with God for her beloved children! "The effectual, fervent prayer of a

righteous man availeth much." Oh, then, let us never weary in praying for our children, since our prayers will avail *much* for them.

But Job not only prays for them in secret; he calls them to prayer, and cultivates in them, even after they have passed the age of infancy, a tender conscience and a readiness to confess their sins. We have no reason to suppose that the series of festivities which these sons and daughters held were other than innocent. As God could challenge Satan to show a single flaw in Job's character, it is not likely that he had neglected the training of his children, and the readiness with which they obey his call is an evidence of their right feeling. But Job knows the peculiar dangers of prosperity and the temptations to which the youthful and light-hearted are especially exposed, and he teaches his children to examine themselves and see if, even inadvertently, they had sinned. Let us learn from his example to be very careful how we retain a holy

influence over our children at the age when they are being gradually weaned from home and assuming individual responsibility, for the responsibility of a parent never wholly ceases.

There is a thought hidden in this history which we may perhaps ponder with benefit. Job offered sacrifices *for his children.* It is true he did it as the priest of his household, and our great Sacrifice having been slain for us, there remaineth now no more offering for sin. But we do still bring our thank-offerings and our free-will offerings into the temple of the Lord, and there seems to be a peculiar blessedness in doing this, not only for ourselves, but for our children. This is a thought especially for the mothers of little children. Who can tell how the offering brought in the name and stead of this little one may be blessed by God to its own soul! how the infant heart thus associated in the work of the Lord through its mother's faith and prayer may be especially softened by

the dews of the heavenly grace, and made more tender, more loving, more self-denying, more earnest in the service of the Lord, even unconsciously to itself, as by the Spirit of the Lord! We love to offer gifts to God in *memory* of our lost loved ones; why should we not "let love antedate the work of death" in consecrating a portion to him in *anticipation* of the time when our beloved may join us in the work of the Lord?

And let us remember that our prayers and efforts for our children are not to cease while life lasts, for "thus did Job continually."

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

"I will lead on softly, according as the children be able to endure."—GEN. xxxiii. 14.

IN our pilgrimage toward the heavenly Canaan we do not travel alone. "No man liveth to himself," and our progress in the divine life is not to be without reference

to our children. They are members of the household of faith equally with us, but they are still babes in Christ. If we ourselves often stumble, how much more are they in danger of falling! "Let us be very gentle among them; as a nurse cherisheth her children" let us cherish this little life which has but now begun.

The piety of our children will be *infant* piety—no more fitted to encounter rude conflict than they themselves are fitted to go out into the world alone. And God has given them a mother not more to nourish and care for their bodies than their souls. "Thou hast seen how the Lord thy God did bear *thee* as a man beareth his son;" we have still need that the Lord should be "long-suffering to us-ward." As we stand in the place of God to our children in matters of authority and of duty, so let us see that we represent him in his care for souls. "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms;" as a mother supports the first totter-

ing steps of her baby, so in their first feeble steps on the highway of holiness let them be constantly aware of our guiding and supporting hands. How carefully we shall remove every little stumbling-block from the way of our baby's first steps! How jealously, too, should we "make straight paths for their feet," lest they stumble in their heavenly walk!

Above all, *our own advance* is to be no impediment to theirs. "To the weak I became as the weak." Our own day's march is to be only "according as the children be able to endure." Is it an unheard-of thing that the strictness of a mother's piety has alienated her children from God? Have not the stern observances, the strict limitations, of her religious life sometimes been a burden heavier than they could bear? Why should we condemn what the Lord hath not condemned? Why should we put a yoke upon the children's necks which we ourselves have not been able to endure? The yoke

of the Lord is easy; let us not make it heavy. Let us beware how we make those hearts sad which the Lord hath not made sad. We know that "forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part in the same;" so let us partake of our children's frailty, becoming one with them by sympathy, entering into all their hindrances and drawbacks. The children are tender; if we overdrive them one day they will die. Let us *lead on softly* "until we come unto our Lord unto his place" (margin).

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

"For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him."—1 SAM. i. 27.

OF all the mothers whose stories are recorded in the Bible, Hannah is the nearest to our hearts. And of all the children, none, except the holy child Jesus, is so lovely as Samuel, the typical child in whom

every mother sees her fairest visions personified. He is indeed the most perfect type of the Child Jesus which we have. Even Joseph, in later youth a most beautiful type of Christ, does not equal Samuel in childish character, marred as his was by the natural self-satisfaction of a "good child." We never read of Samuel falling into sin; his guileless heart is never lifted up by his visions; he has none of the self-importance of one to whom a terrible secret has been entrusted. We never learn that he regretted the choice his mother had made for him of a Nazarite's life with its peculiar restraints, nor that he ever for a moment questioned his duty as to accepting that choice.

May we not seek for the causes of this remarkable perfection of character, endeavoring humbly to learn if in aught we may so imitate this mother's example as to hope for a like blessing in our own children?

We notice especially Hannah's great longing for a child. Her defrauded mother-in-

stinct cries out for the blessing, and will not be denied. Here is none of that reluctance to take up the duties and burdens of motherhood which we so often see. How can we doubt that the child which has drawn its life from that longing, loving heart, will develop a more perfect nature, a larger soul, expanding into greater beauty of character, than the one which has been anticipated with disfavor, its limitations of the expectant mother's pleasures reluctantly submitted to, its demands upon her time grudgingly complied with?

In the bitterness of her soul, in the hunger of her heart, Hannah prayed unto the Lord. She had learned the comfort of pouring out her soul before God. That this was a true rolling of her burden on the Lord is evident, because after she had prayed her prayer and vowed her vow her countenance was no more sad. She knew the blessedness of the one whose hope the Lord is. Could the child of such faith and prayer be other than a child of grace?

Her vow was no superstitious impulse, in which she sought to propitiate the clemency of God, but a deliberate choosing of the *best* lot for this so longed-for child. This is seen from her alacrity in redeeming her vow. At the earliest possible age she brings him up to the house of the Lord: "I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." What the extent of this sacrifice was only our hearts can understand who, like Hannah, have longed for a son, and have received him from the Lord for the petition which we asked of him. It was no light thing, this lending her child to the Lord.

But she had her reward. First, when she knew that (like the Blessed Child of whom he was a type) "the child grew on, and was in favor both with the Lord and also with men." And yet more when "all Israel knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." And oh the joy of knowing that, after many years of with-

drawal, "the Lord appeared again to his people" by the means of her son!

May such great blessedness be ours! There is much for us to ponder over in this subject.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

"And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren; and his mother called his name Jabez [Sorrowful], saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested."—1 CHRON. iv. 9, 10.

BESIDES the happy mothers who have received their little ones with joyful thanksgiving and amid glad congratulations, we find those whose children are ushered into the world with sorrow. Not with reluctance —we should not *so* receive the gift of God— but who can say what darkness of bereave-

ment, what anguish of soul over erring loved ones, what pinching of penury, may rend the heart which broods over the little new-born one in an agony of love and grief? To such comes a word of good cheer in the verses before us. Were they written expressly for sorrowing mothers throughout all time, we wonder? Why else are they here, standing alone in the midst of the dry genealogies, having no hint of connection with the names which precede and follow? Who was this sorrowful mother, or who her honored son, we know not. There is no word of tribe or family, birthplace or brethren. His mother bare him with sorrow. That is all, but it brings her near to many a heart today.

"And Jabez was more honorable than his brethren." This son of his mother's sorrow becomes the son of her right hand. Take courage, sorrowful mother, and look forward in hope. Not always will the night of weeping darken over you and your child. The

Lord is leading you by a way that you know not. "Thy light shall rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday." Will you regret the trials which lead to such honor as *this?* "The Lord granted him the things which he requested." Earthly honor you may not covet for your child, but would not such as this far outweigh a multitude of woes? For what were "the things which he requested"? "That thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me." Can you ask more? You pray not that your beloved "be taken out of the world," but that it may be kept from evil. "That it may not grieve me." You have known grief, sorrowing mother; what better do you ask but that the Lord will keep it from your child? Only "let not your heart be troubled." Rejoice even in the midst of affliction over this blest gift of God. You may live to see this child of sorrow become "more honorable" even than its brethren

sent to you in happier days. "For the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good."

"Refrain thy voice from weeping and thine eyes from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord. . . . And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border."

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

"For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."—ISA. liv. 10.

HOW *firm* a foundation we have who rest our hopes of salvation upon the work of Christ! For who is a rock like our God? Let us consider the terms of our *covenant of peace,* that our souls may be refreshed. In times of bodily weakness we are in especial danger of losing our peace. We examine our own selves to see if we be in the faith, and too often our faith fails us in

that very exercise. But this is owing to our inadequate views of Christ's work. Finished as it was upon the cross as to our redemption, it yet never ceases as to our sanctification and as to our final perseverance. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. It is *his* love, not ours, which secures us. *He* holds *us*, not we him. Our clinging hands, grown weak with long self-nerving, may lose their hold upon our Saviour, yet we are in his arms. He sought us out and ransomed us; shall he let us fall? "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she *may forget*, yet will I not forget thee." Ah, to *me* does not this say enough, and more than enough? It is *impossible* that any should pluck me out of his hand. Does my baby's safety depend upon its clinging to me or to the protecting arms about it? "Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." Fear!

How can I fear when once I have relinquished all dependence upon my *own* steadfastness and depend upon the faithfulness of Him that called me, "who also *will do* it"? Oh let me take the comfort of this covenant of peace! Peter walked on the water to go to Jesus. Did his faith save him? Did it not rather fail him? Yet he did not perish. For Jesus caught him by the hand, saying, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" And shall he not ever hold me by the hand?

Take courage, then, timid heart. He who chose thee before the foundation of the world will still keep thee after the mountains depart. The covenant of his peace shall never be removed, for his love is its surety. Many waters cannot quench that love, neither can floods drown it; thine unworthiness shall not tire it; thy faithlessness shall not discourage it. "Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?" Yes, a thousand times

yes. "They shall never perish; my Father which gave them to me is greater than I, and *no man is able* to pluck them out of my Father's hand." "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us, for "the Lord of peace can give us peace by *all* means," even by these sore afflictions. They all are means of peace to them who are embraced in the covenant of peace. "The Lord is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think, according to the power [his power, not ours] that worketh in us." And we are persuaded that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature *shall be able* to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the

Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and *give thee peace!*"

"Now unto Him that is *able to keep you from falling*, and to present you *faultless* before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever." Amen.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."—1 JOHN iii. 2.

THE contemplation of our future glory, when "he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," is a rapturous employment. That we shall receive the crown of righteousness which he shall give to all them that love his appearing—the robe of fine linen, clean

and white, which is the righteousness of the saints—is not all; but we ourselves shall be *like him*. Oh the joy unspeakable and full of glory which this thought imparts!

We know not what we shall be. Our limited understandings cannot grasp the wondrous thought. *Now* are we the sons of God, but the little child upon our knees, with its tiny growth, its unformed features, its undeveloped intellect, its unconsciousness of the great, yearning mother-love which enfolds it, is far liker to the noble Christian manhood, the sweet, gracious womanhood, which we foresee in it than we, in our best days, in the fullest vigor of our intellects, in the most ripened graces of our Christianhood, in the highest flight of our aspirations, are like to the glorious beings which we shall be. To be like him! We should not have dared to ask it. None but the beloved disciple could have written the word. Oh, *what* to him who had leaned on the bosom of the Lord, what in his exile and sufferings in the

long weary life which made him "the companion" of every suffering one "in tribulation and in the kingdom and *patience* of Christ," what must have been the bliss of this assurance! He who had seen him in the days of his flesh, to whom, even with the veil of humanity upon his Godhead, he had been the chiefest among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely—"he should be like him, for he should see him *as he is!*"

But we too shall be like him. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us, we cannot attain to it. Yet "every one that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." How can sin remain in a heart which is fully possessed with such a hope as this. "Beholding, with open faces as in a glass, the glory of the Lord," we are being "changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." But not till he appears shall the full consummation of the glorious change take place. "When Christ, *our life*, shall appear, we also

shall appear with him in glory. To us, then, even now *to live is Christ.* "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, *who loved me* and gave himself for me." Oh, to see him as he is! Even now a vivid apprehension of him by faith, a sense of his immediate presence, though but transient, lifts us above all the cares and sorrows, obliterates the pains, of this life, but what will it be to see his face? O joy unspeakable and full of glory! "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness. *I shall be satisfied* when I awake with thy likeness."

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice."—PHIL. iv. 4.

IT is strange that any who have obtained our precious hope should require such an admonition. But perhaps to none is it more appropriate than to mothers, both from the many causes which they seem to have for despondency and from the immediate influence which their state of mind has upon their children. Do we feel, as the time approaches for us to resume life's duties with its doubled responsibilities, that we are not sufficient for these things? "The *joy* of the Lord is your *strength*" is no merely poetical phrase, but a *living truth.* Let us prove it, and learn, as thousands have learned before us, that rejoicing in God does really double our ability to perform our duty. Not that our duties are not grave, our responsibilities infinitely solemn. To us is committed the welfare of immortal souls.

How much depends upon us we probably only glimmeringly perceive. But just in proportion as the desires of our heart are for the salvation of our children and the glory of God by them, so much the more should we "*delight* ourselves in the Lord." Oh, let us draw our children to him by the warm influence of a *cheerful* service. Let them not, by seeing in their mother a woman of a sorrowful countenance, learn to misapprehend the character of her Master and of his service. In dwelling upon this subject I cannot refrain from here rendering a tribute to a beloved mother, now glorified, who, in the midst of a life of unusual and heavy sorrows, so exemplified the grace of God that to her children the words "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing," read in the light of her life, were no mystery, but the clearest truth. So let it be with us all. May we never need the rebuke of Christ, "*Forbid not* these little ones to come to me"! For it is possible, even while we are praying, agonizing, for their sal-

vation, that we may *not suffer* them to come to him, frightening them away from the service which they see casts a gloom upon our lives. Oh, let us *willingly* offer unto the Lord our lives and our constant service. Let us commit our way unto the Lord, and our countenance be no more sad. Our strength shall be as our day; we have the word of God and a happy experience of past mercy to confirm the promise, and he is able to make us to rejoice even in tribulation. Yes, to rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is our reward in heaven. Let us have more respect unto the recompense of reward, and we shall no longer go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy. "For I will *strengthen* the house of Judah; I am the Lord their God, and will hear them, and their heart shall rejoice as through wine, yea, *their children* shall see it and be glad, and their heart shall rejoice in the Lord."

THIRTIETH DAY.

"And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil."—LUKE iv. 1, 2.

AFTER having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and having been publicly acknowledged by a voice from heaven as the Son of God, the devil comes to him. From the highest heights to the deepest depths. Ecstatic communion with God—fierce conflict with the Prince of darkness. So Elijah after his triumphant vindication of the honor of God and the fiery exaltation of spirit in which he slew the prophets of Baal, descends almost to the depth of despair. He too spends forty days in the wilderness in a conflict with the tempter. So Moses, after having talked with God as a man talketh with his friend, is suddenly exposed to the fiercest temptation on beholding the sin of the children of Israel. To each the

period of highest privilege is succeeded by a time of stern conflict.

This experience is in a degree repeated in the lives of many of God's children. And I, who for four blessed weeks have been secluded from the tumults of the world, lying in the light of God's countenance under the special influence of the Holy Spirit, am now called to go down from the mount of privilege and enter upon a struggle with the Prince of this world. Now, first, from the demands upon my strength, shall I be sensible of my weakness, and find in each recurring duty a fresh temptation to irritability, to discouragement, to self-indulgence, to repining at the weariness of my lot. The sweet joys of maternity, which thus far have been devoid of responsibility, will themselves henceforth be mingled with heavy cares, with weary nights and anxious days. Many a time I shall cry in sorrow, "Oh that it were with me as in times past!" "the journey is too great for me." Then let me

take courage from the example of Christ. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though *some strange thing* happened unto you, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of *Christ's* sufferings." Yes, Christ has known the desert and the tempter's wiles. Christ has *suffered*, being tempted; he knows every fiery dart of the devil. And shall he not succor us who are tempted? Shall he leave our soul among lions? Ah no; he *knows how* to deliver the godly out of temptation. He will keep "his darling" from the power of Satan. He suffered *for us*, leaving us an example, that we should follow in his steps. Driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, I there shall find the prints of his feet. Walking in them, I am safe, for though tempted he did not fall. The devil left him, and angels came and ministered unto him. And to me "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose." I shall

find waters "break out in the wilderness and streams in the desert, and a highway shall be there; it shall be called the way of holiness." "Therefore, behold, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her, and I will give her vineyards from thence, and *the valley of Achor* [*i. e.* trouble] *for a door of hope.*" He himself is the Way, and he hath said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

"Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee." —1 Kings xix. 7.

ELIJAH was sleeping for sorrow. That mighty, courageous heart, so "very jealous for the Lord of hosts," had fainted. "Take away my life," he prayed, and the Lord answered; an angel touched him and said unto him, "Arise and eat." He sustains, instead of taking away, the weary life.

"The journey is too great for thee," says the messenger of the God of all consolation, and supplies him with that which shall strengthen him for the work before him.

At the threshold of our return to ordinary life we take into account the duties before us, and our spirits faint within us. When we consider that not merely former duties, in which we have so often failed, but new responsibilities, are to be assumed, we shrink in dismay from the task. To train a soul for God, to grapple with the inherent evil of its nature and subdue it, to nourish gracious tendencies, to discern what sins most easily beset it, to guard it from the allurements of the world, to guide the little feet in the way of peace, to "be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with *all long-suffering*,"—this is the work of an angel, and not of a weak, erring mortal who has herself need of guidance and of support. Ah, here is our strength. We *have* need indeed, and our God supplies *all*

our need. "Arise and eat," he says unto us. I, who in my tender sympathy know full well that the journey is too great for thee, have made provision for all thy wants. "In me *all fullness* dwells." "Eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved," "for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

So, as long as we feel our own insufficiency, we are safe; as long as we feel our weakness, we are strong, for then we depend entirely upon Christ. He gives us day by day our daily bread, and the journey need never be too great for us. Only let us never fail to accept the provision he makes. The daily study of his word, daily communion with him in prayer, the hourly lifting up of our hearts to him, the bringing every care and perplexity to his feet, as well as the assembling of ourselves together, and the sacred eucharistic feast,—all are our meal-times, and shall each supply us with a portion of strength. So, feeding by faith on the Son of God, we

shall not find the difficulties of the way too great for us, but in the strength of that meat we shall go through all our pilgrimage until we come even unto Horeb, the mount of God.

THE END.

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